"th se enduring matinee id ls"

A CHRONOLOGICAL LOOK AT SOUND SERIALS (1929 - 1956)

CHAPTER 13
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"I destroyed the instruments and the people working them . . . Soon I will be ready to dictate to those fools below with their armies, their battleships and their guns! There is no force on Earth I can't bring to my feet! The power of electricity can rule the world, Professor!"

It is not until the opening minutes of chapter two of THE FIGHTING DEVIL DOGS (1938) that Republic Pictures' most colorful mystery villain, *The Lightning,* brings into sharp focus his total desire for dominion when he addresses his chief henchman, Professor Gould, as the two take flight in the modernistic aircraft called *The Wing.* Interestingly, the shooting script called for five additional words of dialogue, but they were eliminated during filming: *"And we control that power!"*

The sequence (see photo) showing *The Lightning* destroying the Warfield Laboratory was intended to appear at the beginning of chapter two, but was cut before the serial was released. Probably because the script gave no explanation for *The Lightning's* immunity to the electrical bombardment the lab was undergoing.

The Lightning's costume is superb: black shirt, trousers, and flowing cape, and a bizarre helmet. However, the full color lobby cards for chapter one show his outfit as purple. Too, *The Lightning* makes excellent use of a hand weapon that is capable of discharging bolts of electricity.

To keep the identity of *The Lightning* hidden throughout twelve chapters, four screenplay writers bounced the ball around nicely, casting suspicion on Benson (a butler), Crenshaw (a scientist) and Sam Hedges (a gardener). Benson and Crenshaw would drop out of sight on personal trips that coincided just right with the moments *The Lightning* would join his confederates or transmit to them orders via phone or radio. Hedges spent considerable time eavesdropping (as did Benson).

It is doubtful the actor eventually exposed as *The Lightning* ever played the role. When the masked villain spoke in chapter one, his voice was cold and even (dubbed by Stanley Price, not otherwise in the cast). However, from episode two on, a more evil, gloating type of rhetoric came from behind the mask. Identification of this second voice remains elusive to this date.

Opponents of *The Lightning* were the U.S. Marines. Lee Powell and Herman Brix, fresh from their successes in THE LONE RANGER (pg. 154) made an excellent action team as two Marine lieutenants. This was Powell's last major serial appearance. Later he had a small part in FLASH GORDON CONQUERS THE UNIVERSE in 1940.

Two prominent supporting actors, Sam Flint and John Davidson, received billing throughout the entire twelve chapters, yet were both killed-off in episode one.

A major contributing factor to the serial's success was the high-powered musical score credited to Alberto Colombo.

(Continued on next page)

MASTHEAD: Victor Jory and Veda Ann Borg in THE SHADOW (Columbia, 1940)

Adaptation of Serial for TEMI by
BOB MALCOMSON and ERIC HOFFMAN

Photo Sources: Jim Stringham
C.M. Parkhurst & Eric Hoffman

THE CAST

Lt. Tom Grayson	Lee Powell
Lt. Frank Corby	Herman Brix
General White	Montagu Love
Ben Warfield	Hugh Sothern
Janet Warfield	Eleanor Stewart
Professor Gould	John Picorri
Colonel Grayson	Sam Flint
Crenshaw	Perry Ivins
Benson	Forrest Taylor
Johnson	Carleton Young
Lin Wing	John Davidson
Sam Hedges	Henry Orth
Parker	Reed Howes
Wilson	Tom London
Ellis	Edmund Cobb
Macro	Alan Gregg
Todd	Allan Matthews
(Heavy)	Jerry Frank
(Heavy)	Jack O'Shea
(Heavy)	Al Taylor

The story introduces Lt. Grayson and Lt. Corby in Shanghai, China — then moves them swiftly to the far East U.S. protectorate called Lingchuria, and the province of Ling Chow. There a band of Americans have been trapped by enemy forces. Grayson (in command) and Corby are detailed to "escort them to safety."

In pursuit of their mission, Grayson and Corby (along with a detachment of Marines) stop by a weird, gothic-type fortress. Tom explains: "That's General Lu-Kisan's headquarters. More or less a military police outpost for Lingchuria."

A sentry is found dead, and not a mark on him. Grayson orders a Corporal and two men to report this fact to General Lu-Kisan . . and return immediately.

Inside the building, a grim tableau awaits the Marines. All the rooms are strewn with dead soldiers. However, one spark of life remains — a sinister appearing hunchbacked little man, Professor Gould. Gould is in contact, via short-wave radio, with his unknown "master."

". . . They're all dead. And there is no sign how you killed them."

The response over the radio is: "Good. Return to the base at once. We're leaving for San Francisco. Our real work commences there."

Gould hears and sees the Marines approaching. "Three American Marines are coming here. I can take care of them, but there may be others."

"Anyone entering the Fort must be destroyed. Keep your radio transmitter turned on. If they enter, I shall hear it. That will be my signal to strike."

After waiting thirty minutes, Grayson and his platoon enter the fortress. Lu-Kisan and his dead soldiers are discovered. One Marine looks down at a tin plate and calls out: "Hey, look! Even the flies are dead!"

Outside, Grayson, Corby and Sgt. Bennet react to a flickering light that illuminates the night sky. A weird humming sound is heard as a meteor-like object hurtles toward them and crashes into the Fort. Huge arcs of electrical lightning crackle and writhe the building.

Sgt. Bennet rushes toward the Fort to help his men but, like the others, is electrocuted by a bolt of lightning. Grayson is prevented from meeting the same fate when Corby downs him with a flying tackle, and tells Tom: "It won't do any good. They're all gone!"

Grayson is brought before a Court of Inquiry, once back in the States. He is accused of "causing his command to be wiped out" thru natural sources. A member of the hearing board is Tom's father, Colonel Grayson. Tom produces a letter from Lin Wing, Consul for Linchuria, backing up his story that an unknown force destroyed the Fort.

General White, Lt. Frank Corby, Lt. Tom Grayson.

The commanding officer, General White, telephones Lin Wing. Wing, obviously terrorized, explains: ". . . A fiend is behind a monstrous plot to control whole nations. What happened in Lingchuria was but a small demonstration of his power. I was part of the plan, but I'm willing to give myself up now. I'm ready to tell everything." But before he can, a mysterious masked intruder appears in the entrance to Wing's room. Raising a gun-like device, he fires a streamer of electricity. "*The Lightning!*" gasps the consul before he dies.

At the consul's apartment, a police inspector announces death by electrocution. In Lin Wing's hand is found a small piece of shiny black metal cut in the design of a jagged piece of lightning.

Charred papers are discovered in the fireplace grate. Col. Grayson suggests they take them to his old friend, Ben Warfield — a famous inventor and wealthy manufacturer of electrical equipment — who he knows has an infra-red light that can expose any writing on the burnt papers.

At the Warfield mansion, new characters are introduced. Besides the scientist-inventor, there is his daughter, Janet, and Benson, the butler.

Warfield confirms that the idea of an aerial torpedo being charged with a great amount of electricity "is not entirely outside the realms of electrical engineering." However, the country has no defense against such a weapon.

Later, one evening, Tom joins his father Colonel Grayson, along with Warfield and fellow scientists Crenshaw and Renault, at the Warfield Electrical Mfg. Co. Research Laboratory. A stone with a note attached is thrown thru the window. Tom reads the message aloud: "It's signed '*The Lightning*'. Stop interfering with my plans, or you will be next."

Crenshaw shows alarm: "This place could be struck at any time!"

Warfield recalls he has a device used by the weather bureau for locating electrical storms within a 300 mile radius — an electrograph. He and Tom drive to Warfield's home to pick it up.

Tom heads back to the lab alone in Warfield's chauffeur-driven limousine. However, the real chauffeur has been knocked out and replaced by an agent of *The Lightning*. He is taken to an old service garage and held at bay by several gangsters while the electrograph is smashed. Back at the Warfield house, Warfield, Janet and Benson find the chauffeur. Warfield realizes the scientists must be warned. Then it's discovered the phone is dead and the tires on the only remaining car, Janet's, have been slashed. It is ten-forty now. Warfield points out there is a phone several miles down the road. "If I'm lucky, I'll be able to get to a phone before midnight."

Tom, meanwhile, manages to escape his captors at the filling station and drives off in a car, with the heavies driving in pursuit. However, their automobile skids off the road and crashes.

At the lab, Crenshaw departs shortly before midnight to get coffee and sandwiches.

Outside, on the grounds of the Warfield plant, the bizarre figure of *The Lightning* looks up into the night sky. Inside, Col. Grayson and Renault continue working with the electrical equipment. Tom drives up to the factory gates just as a "thunderbolt" torpedo hits the laboratory. *The Lightning* hides when Tom exits the car and races onto the grounds. "Dad, get out!!" he shouts. His cries are to no avail, as Col. Grayson and Renault are dead.

Chapter one concludes with Tom being struck by electrical lightning sending him crashing to the ground.

[Editor's Note: The shooting script called for one additional sequence. Three men in asbestos suits appear. One concludes: "He (Tom) is still alive. Another says: "Carry him into the building. That'll finish him." Without hesitation, they go directly toward the roaring crackling electric inferno. The leading figure goes thru the open door leading into the interior of the lab. The other two, carrying Tom, follow and are about to enter. *Fade out!* For some reason, the film editors elected to move this event to the opening of chapter two.]

Corby appears and engages the asbestos-clothed men in hand-to-hand combat. Tom comes to and joins the melee. Hearing police sirens approaching, the heavies flee.

The Wing, a huge bat-like plane used by *The Lightning* as a launching pad for his "thunderbolts," takes off into the night.

The following day, Grayson and Corby visit Warfield in the basement lab of his mansion. Crenshaw appears, remorseful he had not returned to the lab out of fear of what might happen. Warfield decides they can use his scientific mind and the two men commence analyzing a piece of "thunderbolt" found by Grayson at the lab site.

Crenshaw discovers the fragment "is like steel with many of the properties of copper." A phone check with the Atlas Steel Company reveals that they have been making experimental casings with just such a metal.

When Grayson, Frank and Janet leave the house, two Marines on the grounds of the Warfield estate march a captive toward them. "We caught this fellow listening at the basement window, sir," addressing Tom.

Janet exclaims: "Why, Sam . . . Sam is our gardener. I'm sure he would do nothing wrong."

Sam Hedges, obviously alibiing, agrees. "That's right, Miss Warfield. I was just trimming some bushes." He's released.

At the hiding place of *The Wing*, Professor Gould and three minions of *The Lightning* (Wilson, Ellis and Macro) listen as the voice of their master comes over a loud speaker:

"Two Marine lieutenants are on their way to the Atlas Steel Company. They must not discover the torpedo casings we have stored in warehouse five. Go in a truck and remove as many as you can. Destroy the rest by the quick heat process. Hurry!"

Tom and Frank arrive in time to stop Ellis and Macro from completing their task at the warehouse, but not before Tom is almost crushed to death by falling steel ingots.

Tom's investigations lead him and Frank to Gehorda Island in the Pacific Ocean. *The Lightning* learns of this and flies to the island, ordering his men to pick up some casings by submarine from the schooner Aurora. The two Marines board the schooner at night and find the casings with gyro-controls attached. But they are discovered and a fight ensues. During this a drum of gasoline is upset, hits a lantern, and the ship becomes a raging inferno. Chapter four concludes with a flaming mast falling toward Tom, who is lying helpless on the deck. (He rolls out of the way in time, dives overboard.)

Grayson and Corby are successful in retrieving one gyroscope from the sunken Aurora and, after many perilous adventures, get it to the mainland. Then in chapter eight, Janet is kidnapped by *The Lightning*. She is to "remain my guest until the gyroscopic direction control is returned to me." Janet unmasks *The Lightning* in episode nine, tho the audience does not see his face. The confrontation went thus . . .

Aboard The Wing (L. to R.): Parker, Wilson, Ellis, *The Lightning*, Janet and Professor Gould. The original script had the conversation (below) slightly different, with Janet saying, "They'll pay no attention to your threats, you murderer!" To which *The Lightning* responded, "Not murderer... *Conqueror!*"

"Lt. Grayson's efforts got him nothing. After the Marines left, your father turned the gyroscope over to me as I ordered."

"Then why am I still a prisoner?

"You'll be sent home. I wanted you to take a message to Lt. Grayson and your father. Tell them to stop their futile attempts to interfere with me."

"They'll pay no attention to your threats."

"No one can stop me!"

With a rapid movement Janet reaches up swiftly and lifts the shroud covering *The Lightning's* face. She recoils with horror: "You!!"

"So . . . you'll never have the opportunity to reveal my identity! Professor! Miss Warfield will remain with you. I want her taken to Gehorda Island at once. No harm must come to her for the present . . ." Facing Janet, he concludes: "A pleasant journey, Miss Warfield."

Episode eleven has Crenshaw claiming to have invented a ray machine that will destroy a torpedo before it leaves *The Wing*. But his demonstration must be made in absolute secrecy. It is to take place at 403 Burton Street.

While waiting for Crenshaw to turn up at the meeting site (his ray machine is already in the room), General White, Warfield, Grayson and Corby sit around a table and review past events, pointing the finger of suspicion at Crenshaw, the butler Benson, and Hedges the gardener. Unknown to them (until too late) agents of *The Lightning* have locked the only door to the room and commence filling it (thru the heating flue) with carbon monoxide. All seem to succumb to the gas as it pours from the hot air register.

Fortunately, Tom falls to the floor where there is still fresh air. He revives sufficiently to be able to get to his feet and smash a glass skylight. All are saved. Later, Tom spots something on the floor the others do not and pockets it. And Gen. White orders Crenshaw's ray machine taken to Warfield's for examination.

On a hunch, Tom checks out with the phone company all calls originating the previous two days from the Warfield mansion. The result sends Tom, Frank and other Marines to an old farm. Tom finds something important in the barn, while Frank discovers Crenshaw tied up in the house.

That night, at Warfield's mansion, Tom wraps-up the mystery. "We have all suspected from time to time that *The Lightning* had access to our group. This is true. And furthermore, at the moment he is in this room. And I am ready to have him pointed out." All three principal suspects (Benson, Hedges and Crenshaw) look guilty.

Tom has a curtain opened, revealing Janet! She is standing in an alcove. It was she who Tom had found in the barn. Janet relates how she was tricked into falling in *The Lightning's* hands. Just as she is about to reveal the man's identity a bolt of lightning streaks toward her. But the girl is safe. What everyone saw was a reflection of her in a mirror. *The Lightning* has exposed himself — *Ben Warfield!* Janet explains that Warfield is not her real father, but cared for her like one. And that the time *The Lightning* spoke to Warfield via radio, it was accomplished with a phonograph record. Tom accounts for the object retrieved from the room in which he, and others, were almost gassed to death — a miniature gas mask disguised as a nose inhaler, secreted in Warfield's handkerchief while holding it to his face.

Warfield makes a break for freedom and escapes thru a secret panel. He races thru the woods to the waiting *Wing*. The plane takes to the sky.

Inside the aircraft, Warfield orders Gould to build up an electrical charge and fire a "thunderbolt" at the mansion. However, Crenshaw, in a bid to save the group, puts his ray gun into operation — confident it will work. And it does! *The Wing* disintegrates in a tremendous explosion.

THE END

DEVIL DOGS most assuredly fits into the category of the "economy" serials." Stock footage ran rampant. Most, if not all, of the sequences of *The Wing* were lifted from DICK TRACY (pg. 45). The middle sequence and cliffhanger from chapter two of ROBINSON CRUSOE OF CLIPPER ISLAND made up the conclusion for chapter five, while the first chapter ending from CRUSOE did additional service as chapter four's cliffhanger. Stock footage of a submarine that hardly ever submerged (CRUSOE again) was used regularly for sequences on Gehorda Island. SOS COAST GUARD contributed some fine motorcycle stunt footage, while the wind-up of chapter eight concerning a motor launch allegedly being crushed between two freighters is lifted bodily from DICK TRACY, Chapter three (pg. 56), yet it originally saw service in Mascot's THE GALLOPING GHOST in 1931. Confirmation of this latter assertion is still under investigation.

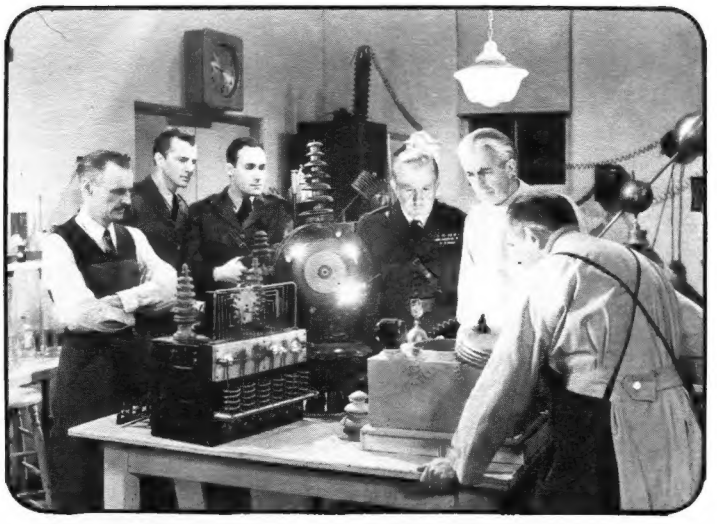
Budget tightening was also evident in that DEVIL DOGS incorporated *two* economy chapters. Chapter seven repreated sequences from number one, while episode eleven used bits from various chapters to place suspicion on the three principal suspects as being *The Lightning*.

Still THE FIGHTING DEVIL DOGS was much more than a usual entry into the chapter-play field simply because it came out so well. A feature version was released in 1943.

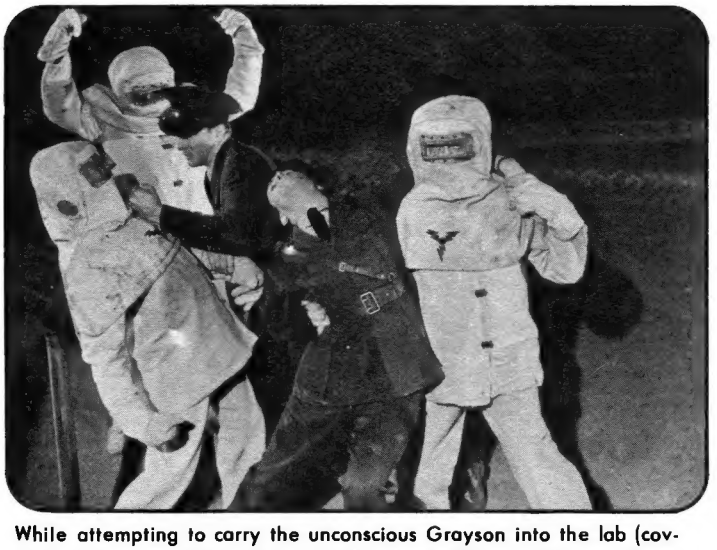
CHAPTER TITLES

1. The Lightning Strikes
2. The Mill of Disaster
3. The Silent Witness
4. Cargo of Mystery
5. Undersea Bandits
6. The Torpedo of Doom
7. The Phantom Killer
8. Tides of Trickery
9. Attack From the Skies
10. In the Camp of the Enemy
11. The Baited Trap
12. Killer at Bay

Republic's THE FIGHTING DEVIL DOGS was released May 28, 1938. Associate Producer was Robert Beche; the directors, William Witney and John English; and the screenplay came from Barry Shipman, Franklyn Adreon, Ronald Davidson and Sol Shor. ①



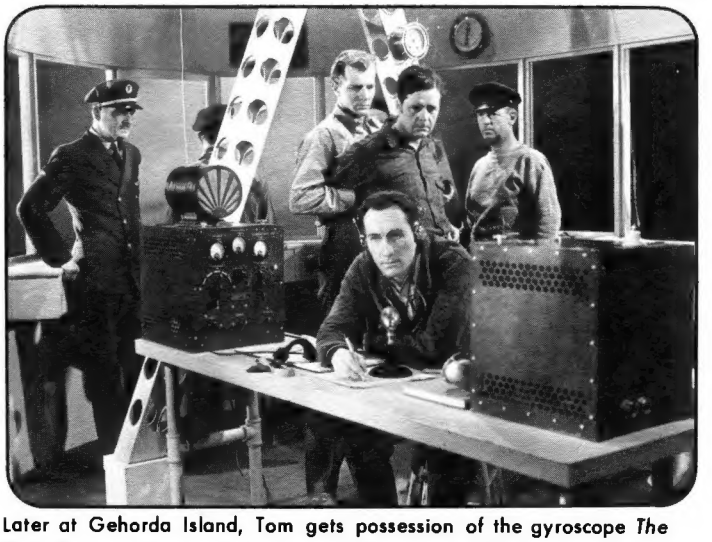
At the Warfield Electrical Mfg. Co. Research Laboratory. L. to R. are Crenshaw, Lt. Corby, Lt. Grayson, Col. Grayson, Warfield and Renault. Note time (9:30). Later all but Col. Grayson and Renault depart. *The Lightning* strikes the lab at midnight with a "thunderbolt." ②



While attempting to carry the unconscious Grayson into the lab (covered with a crackling sheet of electricity), Wilson, Ellis and Macro (minions of *The Lightning*) are set upon by Corby. The two Marines escape. ③

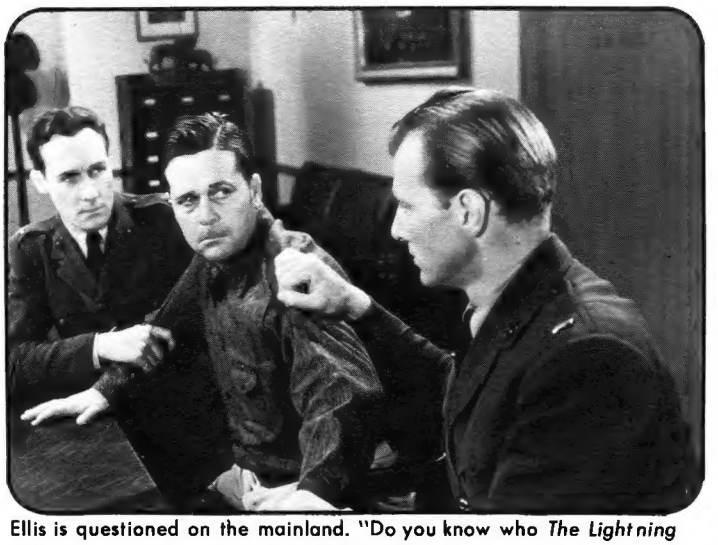
Aboard the "Wing", the three men report to their master. Later *The Lightning* tells his henchman, Gould: "I am never suspected. I move amongst those most anxious to find me out . . . and they never guess." [Editor's Note: This sequence, unhappily, was omitted.] ④

On the trail of steel torpedo casings used by *The Lightning* for his "thunderbolts", Grayson traces a shipment to the waterfront only to learn it was loaded on the schooner, Aurora, which sailed for Gehorda Island the week prior. ⑤

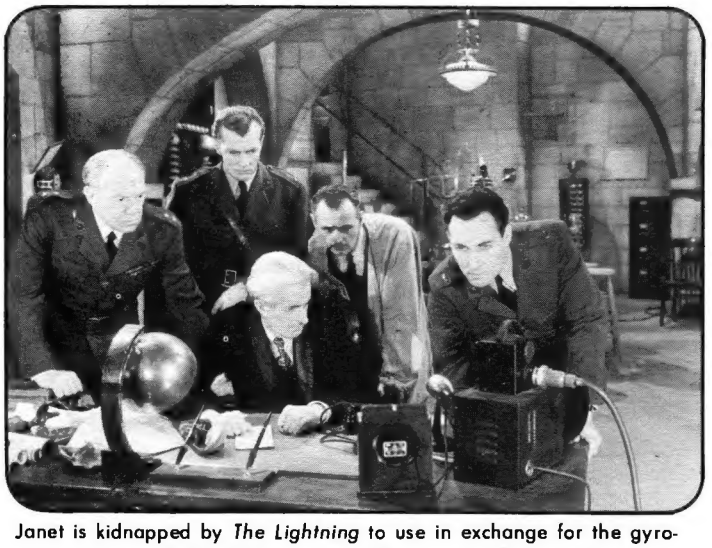


Later at Gehorda Island, Tom gets possession of the gyroscope *The Lightning* uses for guiding his aerial torpedoes. Ellis (held by Corby) is captured trying to sabotage the plane the marines ultimately use to hook-on to a dirigible, board, and head for the mainland. ⑥

The Lightning warns by radio that he will torpedo the dirigible if the gyroscope is not thrown overboard. Rebuffed, he orders Gould (in front of switchboard) to fire a "thunderbolt". The Marines re-enter their plane and use it to intercept the torpedo. (They bail out in time!) (7)



Ellis is questioned on the mainland. "Do you know who *The Lightning* is?" "Yes, I made it a point to find out." "Tell us, man, tell us!" The room suddenly goes dark. A lightning bolt flashes into the scene, killing Ellis! (8)



Janet is kidnapped by *The Lightning* to use in exchange for the gyroscope. He sends Warfield a note: "If you care to hear from your daughter, Janet, turn on your radio at 12 Noon. The dial is already set." (General White is at left.) (9)

Held prisoner on a derelict steamer, Janet hears *The Lightning* say over the radio speaker: "All right, Miss Warfield. You may speak to your father." She does, and just before the microphone is shut off she manages to give a clue to her location. (Al Taylor at right.) (10)

But Grayson appears too late to rescue her. Janet is moved to Gehorda Island, then to the "Wing". There she manages to lift the visor-mask of *The Lightning* and shrink back in horror on learning his identity. (The camera is positioned behind *The Lightning*, so the audience does not see his face.) (11)

Janet is ultimately rescued by Grayson. Thru a ruse, Warfield gives himself away as being the masked madman. He flees to the "Wing" and prepares to torpedo his mansion. Crenshaw's ray machine destroys the plane and its occupants. (Benson is behind Janet.) (12)

REMINISCING WITH LINDA STIRLING / By JIM SHOENBERGER

Editor's Notes: Jim Shoenberger is president of "The Cliffhangers Club" (Chicago-based) and has, over the years, established a friendly dialogue with many of the serial greats. At age 15, he was introduced to the persuasive charms of Linda Stirling upon viewing MANHUNT OF MYSTERY ISLAND (1945). The place of their "meeting" was a small neighborhood theatre on the Northside of Chicago. Little did he realize then that fate (prodded by a few letters and phone calls) would bring them face-to-face 23 years later.

Interestingly, when Jim arrived in Los Angeles he met Linda Stirling's husband, Sloan Nibley, *prior* to meeting his favorite "goddess" — simply because Mr. Nibley graciously volunteered to pick up Jim at his motel and chauffeur him to the Nibley residence in North Hollywood for the question and answer session presented here.

By way of background, Sloan Nibley has been highly acclaimed for his writing contributions to the better Roy Rogers' movies. And, today, Linda Stirling Nibley teaches college classes in English and the drama.

In the '40s Miss Stirling was the heroine in six serials, all for Republic Pictures: THE TIGER WOMAN ('44), ZORRO'S BLACK WHIP ('44), MANHUNT OF MYSTERY ISLAND ('45), THE PURPLE MONSTER STRIKES ('45), THE CRIMSON GHOST ('47), and JESSE JAMES RIDES AGAIN ('47). (See related stories on pages 61 and 134.)

Linda Stirling as THE TIGER WOMAN.

Q. The obvious question first: which was your favorite serial?

A. That would be my first film, THE TIGER WOMAN.

Q. And your favorite Western picture?

A. The one I was pretending to be a dance hall girl. I don't recall the title. I sang two songs. I remember that we did the entire musical sequence in one take, and to my pleasure the whole crew broke into applause.

Q. The film you refer to was "Santa Fe Saddlemates" with Sunset Carson. What would be your choice among the dramatic features you did?

A. "The Madonna's Secret."

Q. THE TIGER WOMAN started your career in motion pictures. Would you tell us how you obtained the part?

A. I was a fashion model at the time. I had posed for a magazine cover that showed me on a beach setting. Well, the photograph showed me in a healthy, athletic atmosphere and it caught the attention of the people at Republic Pictures. The next thing I knew I was filming a screen test — on a horse that I did not know how to ride! Somehow, I got the part, which was fun, and learned to ride horseback fairly well as filming progressed.

Q. Since you were new to films, did any of the cast of the serial help you?

A. Oh, yes. George Lewis and Duncan Renaldo were particularly kind. And, of course, the stuntmen were wonderfully helpful.

Q. What kind of hours did a 'serial queen' have to work?

A. I often had to be at the studio at 5 A.M., sometimes even 4:30. This was quite a change for a girl who more often came *in* at 5 A.M. I still remember those 'golden hours'. Those were the hours for which we received overtime pay when we worked straight thru to 8 or 9 o'clock at night. When this would happen, and we would see the production manager who was responsible for keeping the expenses down, we started singing, 'Oh, Them Golden Hours!'. His face flushed and he commenced waving his arms about. Oh, he did get excited!

Q. Was it a thrill for you to go to your local theater, and see yourself on the screen by an admission paying audience?

A. Unfortunately, few theaters in the Los Angeles area showed serials, and since they were always on Saturdays, I would invariably be working when one of my serials was being shown. We shot six days a week then. However, a few times I did attend the showing of a serial's 'rushes.' This would be the footage filmed the previous day that I would watch at the studio screening room. I don't recall any specific emotion. Possibly because I was too absorbed in the critical self-evaluation of my own performance. I am originally a stage actress, and the change to motion pictures was like entering a different world.

Q. We have heard that you had some amusing weather experiences during the making of THE TIGER WOMAN.

A. It is more amusing now than it was then. January of 1944 was one of the coldest winters in California history. We were shooting on location in Sherman Forest. The weather was so chilly that each morning the prop men would have to sweep the frost off my 'fiery jungle'. I was always afraid that the camera could see my breath everytime I said anything. You probably remember that my TIGER WOMAN costume was not designed for cold weather. What I did was to bring a pair of blue jeans on location with me. Anytime I was not before the camera, I was wearing them to keep warm. Talk about irony! Do you know when I filmed ZORRO'S BLACK WHIP? In the middle of the hot summer! Here I am racing around, covered from head to foot in clinging leather. All you could see were my eyes! On the few parts of my body that were visible, they applied make-up which closed my pores. I fainted twice during that serial, and have been allergic to the hot sun ever since.

Q. Your comments bring up the natural question of whether you have ever been injured while making a film?

A. Only if you consider *nearly* being killed several times. I won't even count the times horses have run away with me,

and I wasn't found until what seemed like an hour. But I can think of three different times I was genuinely scared. Once was while filming THE PURPLE MONSTER STRIKES. (In chapter #6, *"The Demon Killer"*) I was in a pit that was filling with water. I was never much of a swimmer, and the director wanted me to swim from the bottom up, and past the camera for the shot he needed. Since I didn't know how to keep myself at the bottom of the pit for the few necessary seconds, I accepted the suggestion of allowing weights to carry me down. I was given an armful of metal chains and told to jump into the water-filled pit, which I did. As I sank to the bottom, and then tried to rise, I found to my horror that the chains had entangled me, and I could not get free. Thanks to the quick thinking of one of the Lydecker brothers (Republic's special effects experts), who realized that I was in trouble, I was rescued. Another time Tommy Coleman, a prop man, came to my assistance when I nearly drowned, again, in MANHUNT OF MYSTERY ISLAND. For this scene (chapter #6, *"Ocean Tomb"*) I was tied up and actually in the Pacific Ocean, when waves swamped me and I began to go under the water.

Roy Barcroft menacing Linda Stirling in
THE PURPLE MONSTER STRIKES.

Q. I always thought that they used breakaway ropes. Didn't they?

A. No, they really tied me up with regular rope. Not so tight as to cut off my circulation or anything like that, but they wanted it to look as real as they could. Finally, there was that terrifying experience of my fall. I believe that was also during the filming of MANHUNT. In this scene (chapter #13, *"Bridge to Eternity"*), the hero (Richard Bailey) and I were hanging about twenty feet over the wooden floor. We were using what is known as the process stage, where they would show a film on a screen in the background behind us, giving the illusion that we were outdoors and hundreds of feet higher than we actually were. All of a sudden, I was aware of movement alongside of me, and I saw that stuntman Tommy Steele had taken actor Bailey's place. Tommy said to me: "What are *you* doing here? They are going to cut the rope now!!!" Even as he spoke those words, I could see them begin to do just that. In the distance, to one side, I saw *my* double, stuntwoman Babe De Freest, watching me holding on for dear life. Then I heard Tommy's voice urgently saying: "Fall on me, Linda! It's your only chance! You've got to break your fall on my body!" The next second I was plunging downward. If it hadn't been for Tommy, I might have easily broken my arm, or leg, or my neck.

Stirling, Richard Bailey and Barcroft in
MANHUNT OF MYSTERY ISLAND.

Q. Let's turn to some of the happier moments during your stay at Republic. With reference to your fans, does any situation in particular remain as a highlight in your memory?

A. Thanks to the kindness of my fans, there were many sweet, thoughtful moments. But since you asked for a highlight, there certainly was one. For over a year, prior to my marriage to Sloan, I had kept up a fairly regular correspondence with a group of young medical students in Mexico City. I suspect the reason they were such big fans is that my serials were screened in their entirety at some of the best theaters. So, they would see four or five hours of mayhem, and me, at a single sitting. Anyway, somewhere in all of this letter writing, I promised to be their 'Queen' at their graduation ceremony. As Sloan and I were married just a short time prior to the date of the graduation, it was difficult for him to see me go. However, he respected me for keeping my promise and not disappointing those fine young men. There were 300 members of the medical class to meet me at the airport. Also, I met the President of Mexico and had numerous opportunities (and fun) practicing my newly-learned Spanish. I was treated like royalty. A wonderful, memorable experience.

Editor's Note: Jim Shoenberger originally tape-recorded his conversation with Linda Stirling Nibley in 1968. However, he submitted a copy of the text to her as recently as August, 1971, so she could correct any errors in fact, plus approve its appearance in TEMI. And that she did. Too, she expressed appreciation to her fans — and felt complimented to be remembered.

Linda Stirling Nibley, today, with son Tim.

[Editor's Notes: This article was written specially for TEMI by JAMES A. STRINGHAM. Jim also furnished all of the photos. In preparing the narrative, he had the aid of material furnished by: CHRIS WARREN, Director of Becket Academy, East Haddam, Conn.; LEONARD CORREN, Serial Rangers Campus Film Society, Delta College, Stockton, Calif.; and FRANK GUTIERREZ.

The "A" shown in the title (poster above) was dropped prior to release in March, 1938. THE SECRET OF TREASURE ISLAND, directed by Elmer Clifton, was the third (of four announced) Weiss serial production to bear the Columbia signature, and the last. It was easily the best of the group.]

●

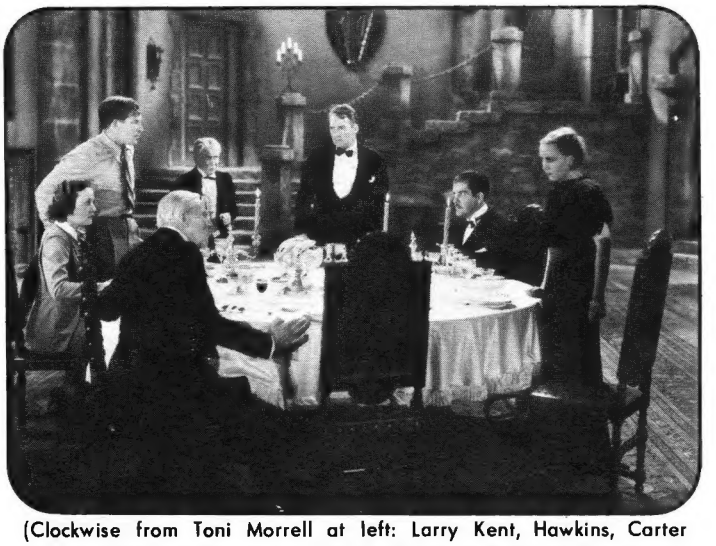
Larry Kent ..... Don Terry
Toni Morrell ..... Gwen Gaze
Grindley ..... Grant Withers
Doctor X ..... Hobart Bosworth
Westmore ..... William Farnum
Carter Collins (The Shark) ..... Walter Miller
Captain Cuttle ..... George Rosener
Jameson ..... Dave O'Brien
Dreer ..... Yakima Canutt
Captain Tom Faxton ..... Warner Richmond
Paul Thorndyke ..... William Royle
Zanya ..... Sandra Karina
Salt Water Jerry ..... Joe Caits
Hawkins ..... Colin Campbell
Professor Gault ..... Patrick J. Kelly

●

CHAPTER TITLES

1. **The Isle of Fear**
2. **The Ghost Talks**
3. **The Phantom Duel**
4. **Buried Alive**
5. **The Girl Who Vanished**
6. **Trapped by the Flood**
7. **The Cannon Roars**
8. **The Circle of Death**
9. **The Pirate's Revenge**
10. **The Crash**
11. **Dynamite**
12. **The Bridge of Doom**
13. **The Mad Flight**
14. **The Jaws of Destruction**
15. **Justice**

In a prologue, pirates secrete a fabulous treasure on an island off the Mexican coast. Pirates, map, and treasure disappear in a violent volcanic eruption. The legend of the island draws searchers for hundreds of years, but the treasure remains hidden until the present (1938) when Carter Collins — "The Shark" — takes possession of the island. The unscrupulous treasure hunter plants mines about the island and turns its ancient Big House into a modern fortress from which he systematically seeks the gold. With him are physician Dr. X; Hawkins, a servant; Grindley; and Zanya, X's nurse. Collins has a portion of the original map. His slave diggers — the "Mole Men" — probe the depths of the island for the treasure.

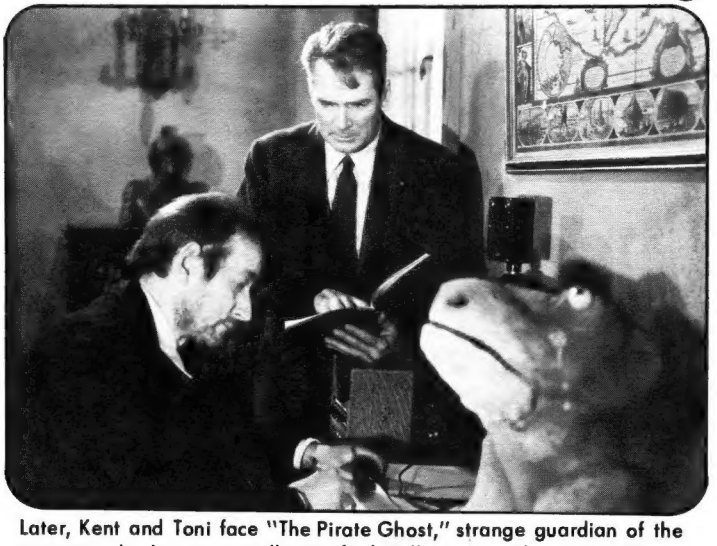


(Clockwise from Toni Morrell at left: Larry Kent, Hawkins, Carter Collins, Grindley, Zanya and Dr. X) Collins is forced to "welcome" two newcomers. They are Toni, who Grindley knows has another portion of the map, and newspaper reporter Larry, who has accompanied her to the island. (2)

Grindley has traced the map fragment to Captain Tom Faxton and mortally wounded him in a vain attempt to seize it. Dying, Faxton gave the map to Toni, "the daughter of an old shipmate" lost in a wreck near Treasure Island, and told her to seek her father on the island, but expired before naming him. (3)

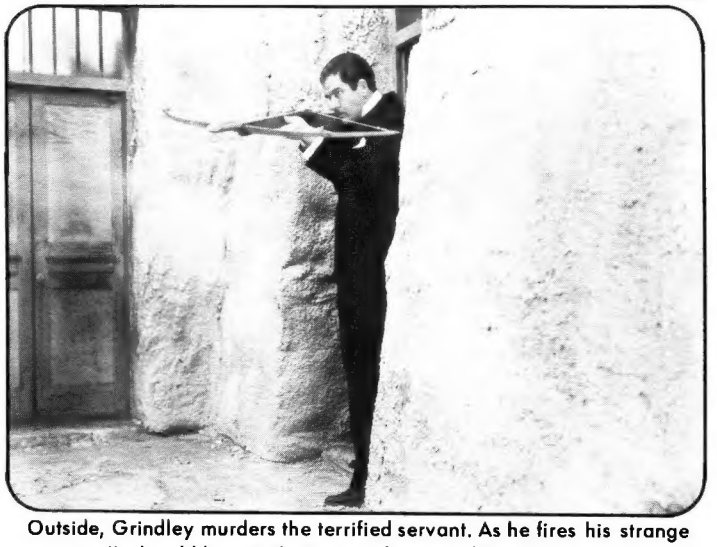
Grindley overheard part of the conversation and followed Toni aboard the steamer "Dolphin" where she met Larry. Kent's editor Westmore had sent him to the island to try to trace Paul Thorndyke, a fellow reporter who had disappeared there, captured by The Shark's men. (Actor Joe Girard is at Kent's left.) (4)

Toni and Larry attempted to land secretly, but were attacked by Collins' guards. Fleeing, Toni fell into a deep cavern where she was threatened by the strange Mole Men led by Dreer. Captain Cuttle, a sinister hook-handed seaman working with Collins, saved her and directed her to the Big House. Kent escaped and followed. (5)

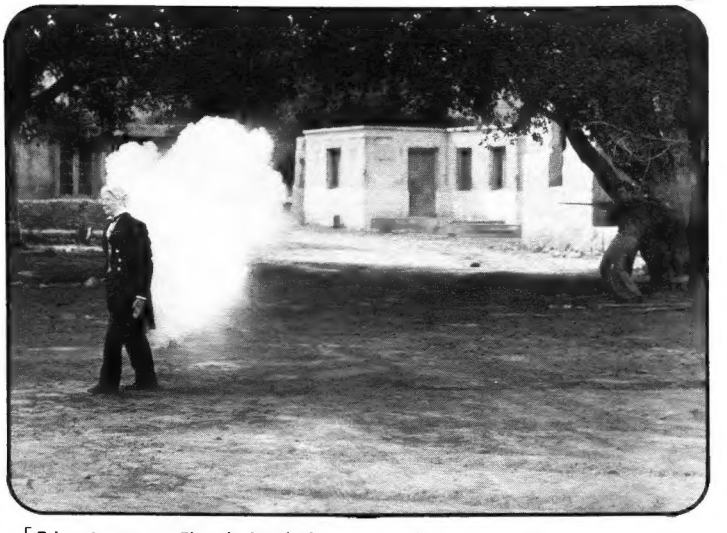


Later, Kent and Toni face "The Pirate Ghost," strange guardian of the treasure who has repeatedly terrified Collins' men. The sinister figure laughs at Larry's revolver and vanishes. Convinced that someone has created the "Ghost" to block his efforts, Collins moves to trace him. (6)

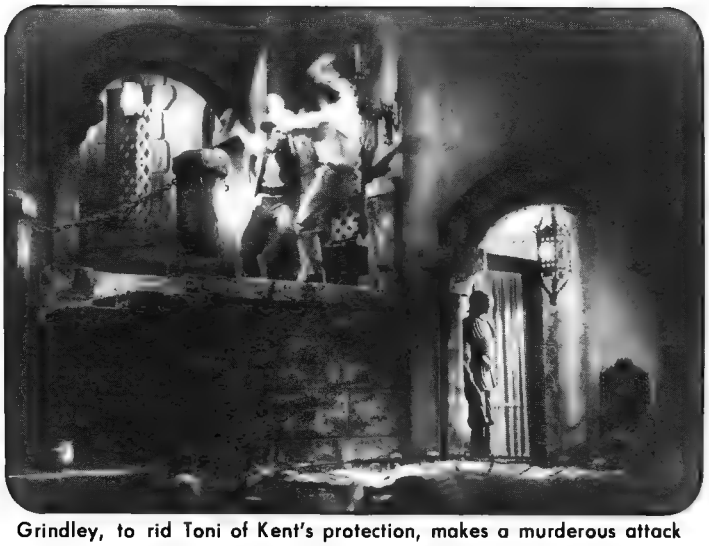
Professor Gault uses a radio directional beam to contact each person on the island. All reply except Grindley. Hawkins goes to find him but sees the "Ghost." Fleeing in terror, he stumbles across the treasure in the House of Bats, an outbuilding. (7)



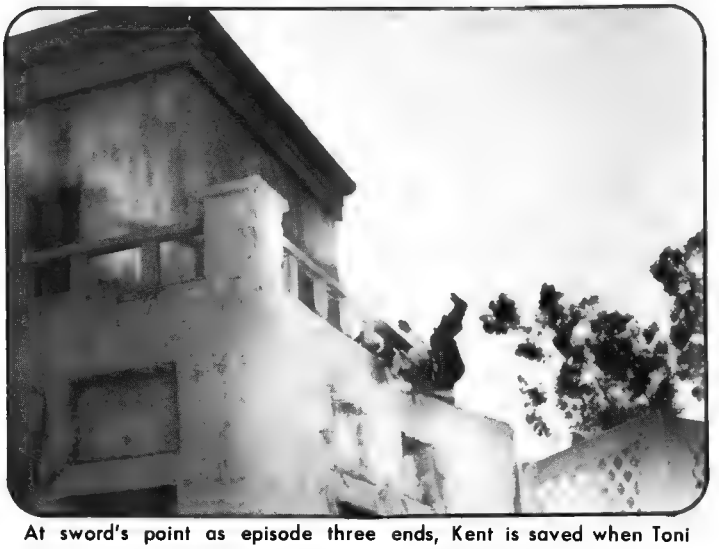
Outside, Grindley murders the terrified servant. As he fires his strange weapon "a bomblike missile traces a fiery arc. (Hawkins) is enveloped in flame and smoke and pitches forward, dead." Larry finds several gold coins in Hawkins' clenched fist, encouraging Toni in her search for the treasure. (8)



[Editor's Note: This behind the scene photo shows how the assassination of Hawkins was accomplished. Two crew members exercise their pyrotechnic talents on a well made mannequin.] (9)

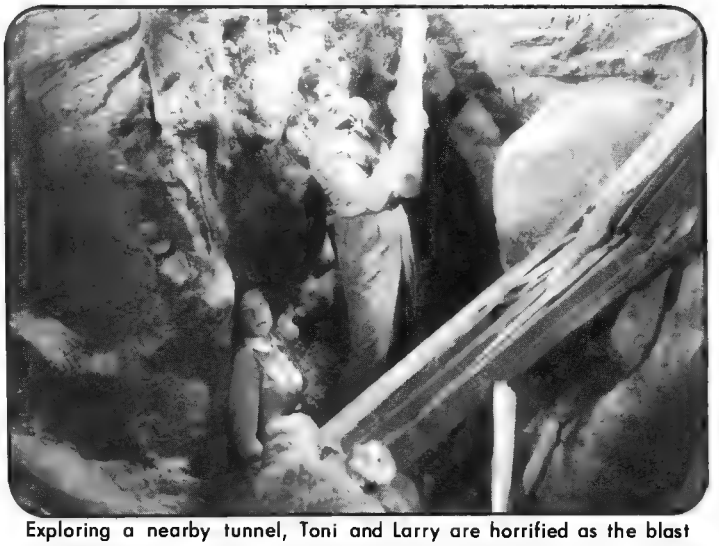


Grindley, to rid Toni of Kent's protection, makes a murderous attack on the reporter disguised as a very solid "Ghost." Kent crashes to the ground. [Editor's Note: Much in evidence is the safety device used, typical of the careful preparation of any Yakima Canutt stunt.] (10)



At sword's point as episode three ends, Kent is saved when Toni distracts his assailant. He gains the upper hand and Grindley, lacking the real "Ghost's" ability to fade away, makes an inglorious exit from an upper window. (11)

The Mole Men revolt! As they battle Grindley, Dreer, and Collins' guards, an explosive charge is detonated! (12)



Exploring a nearby tunnel, Toni and Larry are horrified as the blast sends tons of rocks down around them! They vanish as the entire cavern seems to collapse! A small section of the tunnel holds up, and Larry smashes a way out before it falls. He leaves Toni with Doctor X, who treats her injured shoulder. (13)

Jameson, a mainland policeman, arrives with Toni's friend, Salt Water Jerry, to investigate the island and its connection with the Faxton murder and the missing men. Larry observes them and later rescues Jerry from Collins' guards. (14)

At the house, Kent hears a scream from X's office. All converge on the room to find that Toni has vanished. Collins opens a closet door and Jameson falls out. As another scream sounds, he throws open a second door — and faces the "Ghost!" (15)

As Collins cowers before him, the "Ghost" vanishes. When the others leave, Gault enters, opens the suit of Chinese armor, and removes Toni. He takes her from the house and arranges to meet her at Vultures' Peak lookout station to tell her of her real father.

(16)

Larry is imprisoned in an underground cell. Nearby, the sea bursts into a tunnel. The Mole Men flee, and Kent seems doomed by the rapidly rising waters. But Cuttle blasts an outlet, and the waters recede. Larry pretends to be dead when a guard returns, then, as he comes within reach, attacks him and seizes the keys.

(17)

Kent, Toni, Jameson and Jerry attempt to escape from the island in Jameson's speedboat, but Collins fires on them with a modern field piece. All are swept into the sea when a high explosive shell hits. Jameson dies in the blast.

(18)

Larry and Toni go to keep the appointment at Vultures' Peak. Grindley locks the girl in the shack. As Larry arrives, the volcano erupts, sending a huge, incandescent rock crashing into the building! Kent smashes the door to carry Toni to safety.

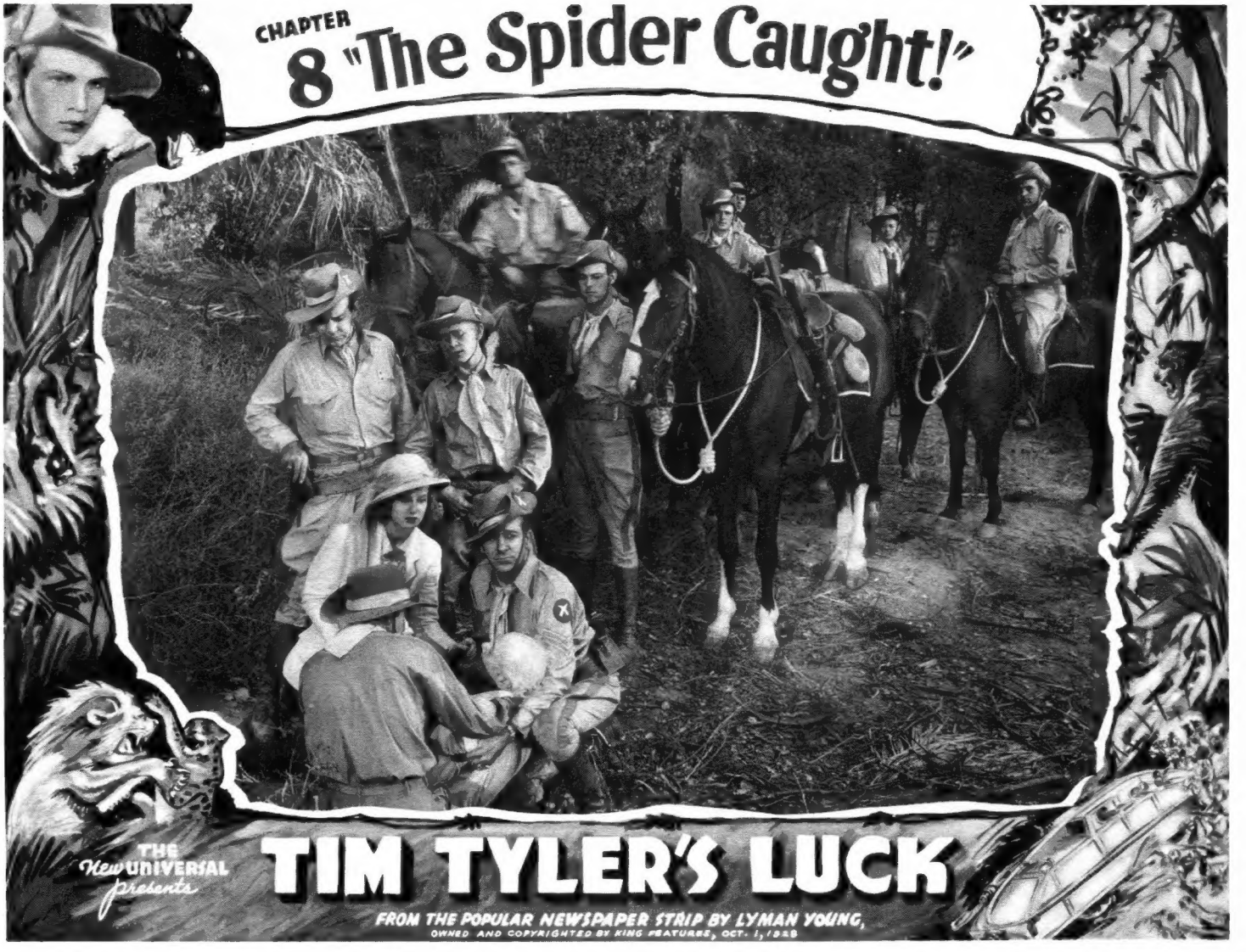
(19)

Grindley covers them at the ladder and demands the map. Larry jumps him, and, as the two men fight, Toni feels the frail ladder pull free from the side of the cliff.

(20)

Clinging desperately to the ladder, Toni falls through space!
(TO BE CONCLUDED IN TEMI #14)

(21)



Kneeling over Al Shean are Frankie Thomas (back to camera), Frances Robinson, and Jack Mulhall. Standing behind Mulhall are William Benedict and Tom Steele (holding reins).

TIM TYLER'S LUCK, Universal's last of five 1937 releases, was an adaptation of the Lyman Young comic strip (another King Features adventure, originally copyrighted Oct. 1, 1928). Later episodes introduced "The Graveyard of the Elephants," site of a fabulous treasure of ivory which Professor Tyler (Al Shean, best known as one half of the vaudeville team, Gallagher and Shean) had located before his disappearance. The jungle cruiser roared out of its hideout in the Ugandi quicksand swamps to carry Webb, Drake, and their henchmen in search of the ivory. Tim, Gates, and Lora fought them for 12 episodes. Frankie Thomas (TV's "Space Cadet") was good as the youthful Tyler, and veteran Jack Mulhall made an excellent adult hero. William Benedict was Spud, Tim's partner in the newspaper strip, but had little to do in the serial. Norman Willis and Anthony Warde provided fine menace, and Earl Douglas, Alan Gregg, Edward Parker, Stanley Blystone and Frank Mayo played supporting roles. Ford Beebe and Wyndham Gittens directed.

CHAPTER TITLES

1. **Jungle Pirates**
2. **Dead Man's Pass**
3. **Into the Lion's Den**
4. **The Ivory Trail**
5. **Trapped in the Quicksands**
6. **The Jaws of the Jungle**
7. **The King of the Gorillas**
8. **The Spider Caught**
9. **The Gates of Doom**
10. **A Race for a Fortune**
11. **No Man's Land**
12. **The Kimberly Diamonds**

At an African port, the steamer "Congo Queen" prepares to sail upriver into the interior. Tim Tyler (Frankie Thomas) attempts to stowaway aboard the craft, but is turned back by the captain who refuses to take a lone youngster into the jungle. Later, Tim reboards the ship and hides in the hold amidst crates of munitions bound for the Ivory Patrol headquarters at Ambesi. Also aboard is Lora Graham (Frances Robinson) who, traveling as Lora Lacy, seeks Spider Webb (Norman Willis), the master criminal who had committed the Kimberly diamond robbery for which her brother, Donald, had been framed.

Later, Tim sees "hunter" Gary Drake (Anthony Warde) fasten Lora's door shut, then lead a band of armed men forward. Tim releases the girl as Drake's cutthroats begin to massacre the crew. The two escape to the shore before Drake discovers Lora's absence.

After unloading the beached steamer, Drake shoots down an Ivory Patrolman who had seen the seized ship. But the trooper's runner, altho wounded, pounds out a message which is relayed by the many drums of the "jungle telegraph." Nearby, Tim and Lora see a strange metal vehicle approach. Tim gasps as he recognizes the armored jungle cruiser his father developed for use in his study of the jungle apes before he disappeared. They see Webb alight, and berate his men for the murder of the patrolman (Webb understands the drums). Ivory Patrol munitions are loaded aboard the cruiser.

Lora screams as a leopard appears nearby, and Webb's men hear her and begin to search the area. Tim spots the patrolman's horse and the two ride for their lives as the gang pursues in the cruiser. Ivory Patrol troopers led by Sergeant Gates (Jack Mulhall), summoned by the drums, appear and gallop after the strange vehicle, but their shots are blocked by its armor. Webb's men hold them off with gunfire, then hurl a grenade from the stolen munitions cases. The pursuers' horses fall or go wild with panic at the blast. Ahead, Tim and Lora are thrown to the ground as their horse stumbles. The cruiser roars down on them!

Just before the mahout (Everett Brown) dies in chapter ten, he bequeaths his elephant, Bolo, to Tim, ordering the animal to obey him.

In chapter twelve, Bolo (real name, Anna May) pushes the jungle cruiser over a cliff, where it crashes to destruction. Editor's Note: There are those who speculate that the cruiser is the same machine used earlier as the "Juggernaut" in Republic's UNDERSEA KINGDOM (pg. 92). Not improbable. But the portholes, fin, rails, and "sideview" mirror are 100% different — so Universal may very well have built their own "shell" and fitted it over an automobile. *Strangely*, both vehicles moved on rubber-tired wheels.

MEET THE DIRECTORS of G-MEN NEVER FORGET (Republic, 1948) — Yakima Canutt (far left) and Fred Brannon (far right). Others, l. to r., are Roy Barcroft, Ramsey Ames, and Clayton Moore.

THOSE ENDURING SERIAL FANS

Letters from TEMI fans are most welcome. However, the information supplied in these columns by readers is based on their opinions. The editor does not necessarily purport the info to be complete, exact or accurate.

CONCERNING TEMI #11 & #12

In OVERLAND WITH KIT CARSON (pg. 163), Andy Gardner is portrayed by Bobby Klack and not Clark. The scene depicted in chapter one lobby card is a still done during production of chapter 14.

Jon Tuska
Milwaukee, Wisc.

In the first LONE RANGER still on pg. 158, the *real* Col. Marcus Jeffries is played by unbilled Forbes Murray.

I doubt the statement that this famous serial was made for under $100,000. The usually reliable *Motion Picture Herald* once gave production costs as $320,000, a figure I quote in 'Golden Age of Republic Serials' - Part I) in issue #17 of *Screen Facts*.

As to who played the High Priest in the '36 FLASH GORDON, Lon Poff is the actor used in the first chapters (pg. 151). The character then disappears for a few episodes and re-appears in the person of Theodore Lorch who alone gets screen credit. I have no idea why the switch was made unless Mr. Poff became indisposed.

Ed Connor
N.Y.C.

Lon Poff acted the role of High Priest #1, and was uncredited in cast because of his sudden death during production. Theodore Lorch completed the serial as High Priest #2 in FLASH GORDON.

Al Taylor passed away on 10/10/1947. He was 65. And Matthew Betz, at 57, died 1/26/1938.

William John Ryan
Bronx, New York

On pg. 159, the unidentified actor sitting with Hal Taliaferro and Bud Osborne is Jack Perrin.

Edward R. Billings
Nashua, N.H.

Al Taylor is peering over THE LONE RANGER'S outstretched left arm in scene 5, pg. 158. Blackie Whiteford is next to Chief Thundercloud in the same scene, and is about to club Herman Brix on pg. 156. Taylor and Whiteford also appear in scene 10, pg. 159, on either side of John Merton. Carl Stockdale appears front center in scene 4, pg. 158.

In chapter 11 (pg. 148) did anyone else think that the masked raider holding Bill Elliott's arm might be Tex Palmer?

Wayne Campbell
Memphis, Tenn.

I take exception to your statement that THE LONE RANGER cost less than $100,000. Never!! Closer to $340,000 and six weeks to film. Only DRUMS OF FU MANCHU took longer and along with SECRET SERVICE IN DARKEST AFRICA cost as much. And these came later and measuring the value of the 1938 dollar, just think what it would have cost today.

Now you may ask from *who* or *whom* do I get my figures. Will the following people do???

W. J. O'Sullivan, who came out from New York with Herbert Yates when the latter formed Republic.

Robert Beche, who today is production manager on "Gunsmoke" and who was associate producer on FIGHTING DEVIL DOGS — which was made for $100,000 or less.

Sol C. Siegel, who I knew at 20th Century and later Paramount. He told me many stories about this serial.

William Witney, who was directing "Bonanza" episodes on the Paramount lot at the time.

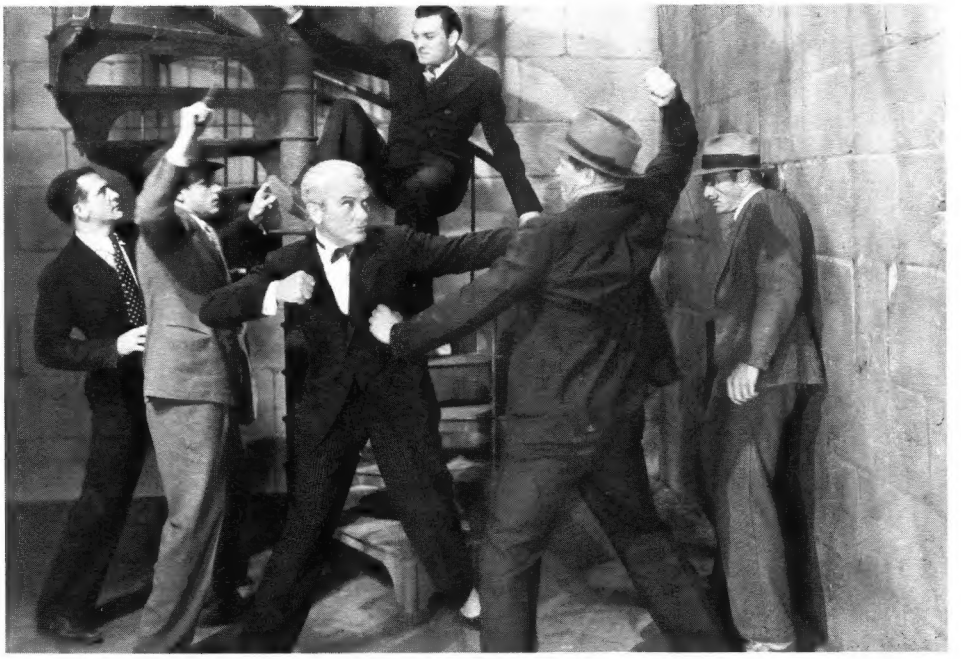
The late *John English*, who was at Desilu directing some "Lassie" shows.

Herman Brix (Bruce Bennett) recalled the 100s of extras used and remembered it looked like something out of a C.B. DeMille epic.

Harry Sanford
L.A., Calif.

Your caption for the FLYING DISK MAN FROM MARS (pg. 167) is incorrect. Gregory Gay as Mota arrives via the same method as The Purple Monster. Republic used footage from chapter #1 of THE PURPLE MONSTER STRIKES ('45) for the arrival in chapter #1 of DISK MAN. They even dressed Gregory Gay in Barcroft's old costume and re-employed James Craven — this time in the role of Bryant, a renegade scientist, to match up the new film with stock. It is later in episode #1 that the disk is created.

Neville S. Brown
Cheshire, England



I wonder if those who saw BLAKE OF SCOTLAND YARD (pg. 145) can remember Herman Brix in an unbilled role playing a "heavy"? Wearing a mustache, scar, and a patch over his right eye, he was one of "The Scorpion's" henchmen. In one episode his mysterious boss reprimands him for not carrying out orders properly: "Any more mistakes like that, my friend, and you will soon be leaving my employ — by the river!" — Harold W. Seacombe, London, England.

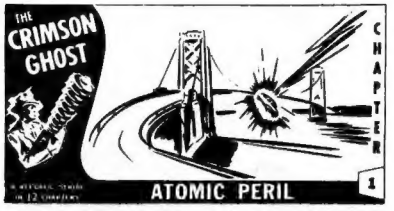
[*Editor's Note: L. to R. in photo are George DeNormand, Robert Terry, Herbert Rawlinson, Ralph Byrd, Ken Curtis and Herman Brix.*]

EDITOR'S NOTES

Concerning the cost of THE LONE RANGER. No way did expenses reach $300,000 plus, unless you choose to believe Republic's publicity releases. Consider this quote from 'The London Sunday Times Magazine', 10/4/1970, page 33: "Inescapably associated with spectacular productions are spectacular lies. Publicity departments invent the most ludicrous statistics." TEMI couldn't put it any better.

Admittedly, $100,000 was too low a price tag for THE LONE RANGER. $150,000 to $200,000 would be closer.

Let's look at some costs for Republic's THE CRIMSON GHOST, released eight years after T.L.R. Bear in mind, the purchasing power of the dollar was far less in 1946 than 1937/38. Also, according to the "Film Daily Yearbook" 18,765 theaters were operating in 1946. That year Universal, Republic and Columbia released a combined total of 11 new serials. But only 8,000 theaters were regularly showing serials, including 2,000 *not* using them 52 weeks of the year. So bookings were not fantastic and expenses had to be kept to a minimum.



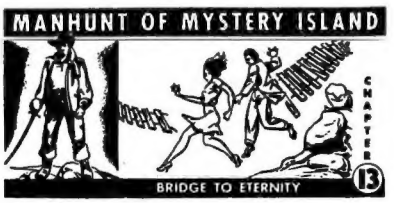
The budget for the 12-episoder THE CRIMSON GHOST (a well produced, exciting chapter-play) called for an outlay of $1475 for studio cars, motorcycles and a dog and trainer. Bit players, extras and atmosphere cars (furnished by cast)

(Continued on next page)

(Continued from page 183)

came to $1982. Stunt doubles earned $2067. Production took 24 working days.

Filmed two years earlier was the 15-episoder MANHUNT OF MYSTERY ISLAND. Location rentals, special equipment (boats and crew), and construction work done on location had a budget of $3665. Extras, bit players and stunt doubles



totaled $1920. Production took 29 working days. Interestingly, a camera boat cost $100 per day and a fisherman's shack (on location) cost $25. Exterior views of the mansion house used throughout the serial, but filmed in one day, had a rental fee of $150.

So you can readily see, Republic production costs were held low (aided and abetted by a goodly amount of stock footage from previous features and serials).

TEMI / EDITOR & PUBLISHER • ROBERT M. MALCOMSON
CHIEF — ILLUSTRATIONS DIVISION • JAMES A. STRINGHAM

TEMI fan C.M. "Parky" Parkhurst was kind enough to loan us the complete budget breakdowns for the two serials discussed here so the figure totals could be shared.

On page 165, it was said that Jon Tuska would be discussing in VIEWS & REVIEWS Magazine the better Mascot serials in Volume 3, Number 1. The volume is correct, but not the number. The essay is forthcoming. In the current V&R, you might be interested to know that Mr. Tuska has printed a 15-page article on "The Sound Serial" by this editor. Address of the magazine is on pg. 165.

On page 166, the price of Kirk Alyn's book "A JOB FOR SUPERMAN!" was given as $4.00. This is a typo that got thru the proofreader. Not unusual. The price should have read $4.50.

Lest this editor forget. Kudos to Earl Blair, Jr. and his fellow workers for a magnificent (sensational!) job in making HOUSTONCON '71 a memorable "serial" experience.

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